optimum image, said central processing unit further creating batches of digital images from the multiple customer orders, the images in each batch having similar identification data, such that a batch of images may include images from different customer orders, said central processing unit further determining an output sequence of each of said obtained digital images to said output devices based on at least the associated identification data;

provide a digital image product based on the obtained digital image at said digital output device; and

combining the digital image product from the output devices with a related original order from said original orders using the associated identification data.

4. (Amended) A method according to claim 1, wherein said identification data is at least source data indicative of a source of said obtained digital image.

5. (Amended) A method according to claim 1, wherein said identification data is at least a unique consumer/retailer identifier.

15. (Amended) A photofinishing lab for producing digital image products, the photofinishing lab comprising:

a plurality of image obtaining devices for obtaining digital images, each of said digital images being related to multiple customer orders;

a plurality of image output devices for providing digital image products based on said obtained digital images, each of the obtained digital images being associated with identification data;

a central processing unit which receives said obtained digital images and the associated identification data, said central processing unit being adapted to analyze the obtained digital images and compare each of said obtained digital images with reference image data representative of an optimum image, said central processing unit being further adapted to create batches of digital images from the multiple customer orders, the digital images in each batch having similar identification data such that a batch of digital images may include digital

images from different customer orders, said central processing unit being further adapted to determine an output sequence for each of said obtained digital images to said image output devices based on at least the associated identification data; and

a finishing arrangement which is adapted to combine the digital image products from said image output devices with a related original order from said original orders using the associated identification data.

17. (Amended) A photofinishing lab according to claim 15, wherein said identification data is at least source data indicative of a source of said obtained digital image.

18. (Amended) A photofinishing lab according to claim 15, wherein said identification data is at least a unique consumer/retailer identifier.

29. (Amended) A photofininishing method for managing workflow in a photofinishing lab, the method comprising the steps of:

receiving images at the photofinishing lab, each of said images being related to multiple customer orders;

associating each image with identification data;

sending each image and its associated identification data to a processing unit, the processing unit analyzing said image with reference to image data representative of an optimum image and creating batches of digital images from said multiple customer orders, the images in each batch having similar identification data, such that a batch of images may include images from different customer orders, said processing unit further determining an output sequence of each of said images to output devices based on at least the associated identification data;

providing an image product based on the image at an output device of said output devices which is appropriate for the image product; and

combining the image product from the output device with a related original order from said original orders using the associated identification data.

33. (Amended) A computer program product comprising:

a computer readable storage medium having a computer program thereon which when loaded into a computer causes the computer to manage workflow in a photofinishing lab by performing the following steps:

associating images received at the photofinishing lab with identification data, each of the images being related to multiple customer orders;

sending each image and its associated identification data to a processing unit, the processing unit creating batches of digital images from said multiple customer orders, the images in each batch having similar identification data, such that a batch of images may include images from different customer orders, said processing unit further determining an output sequence of each of said images to output devices based on at least the associated identification data;

providing an image product based on the image at an output device of said output devices which is appropriate for the image product; and

combining the image product from the output device with a related original order from said original orders using the associated identification data.

35. (Amended) A computer program product according to claim 33, wherein said identification data is at least source data indicative of a source of said image.

36. (Amended) A computer program product according to claim 33, wherein said identification data is at least a unique consumer/retailer identifier.

38. (Amended) A digital photofinishing arrangement comprising:

a plurality of output devices, each of said output devices being adapted to produce a different output image product;

a plurality of image obtaining devices for obtaining images from multiple customer orders, at least one of said image obtaining devices being adapted to convert non-digital images of the obtained images into a digital format so as to place all of the obtained images in a common digital format; and

a processing unit which is adapted to create a virtual batch of said obtained images for forwarding to said plurality of output devices, said virtual batch including images from different customer orders and being created based on at least a time necessary to complete the image products, so as to compile a sequence of completion of said output image products that permits efficient use of said output devices.

40. (Amended) A photofinishing method comprising the steps of:

receiving images from multiple customer orders at a photofinishing lab;

converting non-digital images of said received images into a digital format, such that all of the images received at said photofinishing lab are in a common digital format; and

creating a virtual batch of said received images based on at least a time necessary to complete output image products at any of a plurality of output devices, said virtual batch comprising images from different customer orders, each of said output image products being related to an associated received image from said received images, such that a sequence of completion of the output image products that permits efficient use of the output devices is compiled.

42. (Amended) A method of managing workflow in a photofinishing lab comprising the steps of:

receiving images from multiple customer orders at the photofinishing lab;

· reading codes on order envelopes associated with said received images to determine an output service/product which will be produced in association with said received images;

placing the order envelopes in sequence at a location designated for the output service/product;

producing the output service/product associated with the received image based on the sequence of the order envelopes at the location designated for the output service product; and

delivering the produced output service/product to the appropriate order envelope at said location in a sequence which matches the sequence of the order envelopes.

43. (Amended) A method according to claims 42, wherein said codes comprise service/product data indicative of a type of image product for the image, such that images are modified in accordance with the service/product data and an output device to which the image is to be sent.

44. (Amended) A method according to claim 42, wherein said codes comprise source data indicative of a source of said image.

45. (Amended) A method according to claim 42, wherein said codes comprise a unique consumer/retailer identifier.

46. (Amended) A method according to claim 42, wherein said codes comprise at least one of a product/service data, a source data and a unique consumer/retailer identifier.

47. (Amended) A computer program product comprising:

a computer readable storage medium having a computer program thereon which when loaded into a computer causes the computer to manage a photofinishing workflow by performing the following steps:

determining an output service/product which will be produced in association with captured images from multiple customer orders; and

creating a virtual batch of the images based on at least the output service/product associated with the image, said virtual batch including images from different customer orders and being indicative of an order sequence for completing the output service/product for the image.

48. (Amended) A photofinishing method comprising the steps of:

receiving images from multiple customer orders at a photofinishing lab;

associating the images with identification data; and

creating a virtual batch of said images based on at least the identification data so as to provide for a sequence of completion of output image products associated with the images, said virtual batch including images from different customer orders.

53. (Amended) A photofinishing method comprising the steps of:

receiving images from multiple customer orders at a photofinishing lab in a first sequence;

converting non-digital images of said received images into a digital format, such that all of the images received at the photofinishing lab are in a common digital format; and

creating a virtual batch of the received images based on at least a common output product/service in a second sequence different than the first sequence, said virtual batch comprising images from different customer orders, wherein each of the received images are associated with original customer orders which are in said first sequence, and said method comprises the further step of re-sequencing the original customer orders from said first sequence to said second sequence.

Please cancel claim 54 without prejudice or disclaimer.